

Start programs, community- and faith-based providers of Head Start services employ parents and encourage parents to volunteer in the programs because parents are children's most important and influential teachers.

(G) community- and faith-based providers of Head Start services not only serve the needs of low-income children and their families but enrich, strengthen and reflect the diversity of the communities wherein they reside, and

(H) the Head Start Act is a critical component of America's civil rights platform, and community and faith-based organizations have been leaders in the civil rights movement in the United States.

(2) supports the continued role of community and faith-based organizations in Head Start programs as providers of comprehensive services to children, families, and communities, and

(3) extends its gratitude to community- and faith-based organizations that provide Head Start services, and to the employees and volunteers for their commitment to the education, health, and economic well-being of low-income children and families.

Page 52, after line 19, insert the following: "(3) CONTINUED ELIGIBILITY.—Faith-based and community-based organizations continue to be eligible, on the same basis as other organizations, to participate in any program under this subchapter for which they are otherwise eligible."

Page 120, at the end of line 15, add the following:

Faith-based and community-based organizations continue to be eligible, on the same basis as other organizations, to participate in any program under this section for which they are otherwise eligible.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 348, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. SHULER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. SHULER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I am proud to be a product of Head Start. As a young boy, I attended a Head Start program, and that helped make me the man that I am today.

It's time for Congress to recognize that faith communities contribute to Head Start. That's why I am proud to introduce this amendment today, along with Congressman ELLSWORTH, Congressman DONNELLY, Congressman CARNEY and Congressman LOEBSACK.

This amendment thanks the community and faith-based organizations for the good work that they have done running the Head Start programs. It also confirms its right to continue running these programs.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, let's be very clear at the outset about why this amendment is being considered today: It's all about

political cover. It has nothing to do with protecting the civil rights of faith-based providers. If that is what we are out to do today, we would be considering Mr. FORTUÑO's amendment right now. Instead, the majority has brought up a hollow, politically motivated attempt to have it both ways. On one hand, this amendment cheers the work of faith-based providers and recognizes their contributions to our Nation; but on the other hand, it leaves them completely unprotected when it comes to their right to preserve their identity while serving children in Head Start. Frankly, this is insulting to faith-based organizations as it is transparent. Let me elaborate.

With respect to hiring authority, section 702(a) of title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended in 1972, states, "This subchapter shall not apply to a religious corporation, association, educational institution or society with respect to the employment of individuals of a particular religion to perform work connected with the carrying on by such corporation, association, educational institution or society of its activities."

Mr. Chairman, does this amendment reaffirm the language from this statute? No, it does not.

Consistent with this language from the Civil Rights Act, former President Clinton signed four laws that explicitly allow religious organizations to retain their right to staff on a religious basis when they receive Federal funds. The 1996 welfare reform law, the Children's Health Act of 2000, the Community Services Block Grant Act of 1998, and the Community Renewal Tax Relief Act of 2000 each contain language that reflects the language offered to the Rules Committee yesterday by Mr. FORTUÑO.

Mr. Chairman, does this amendment reaffirm the language signed into law on four separate occasions by former President Clinton? No, it does not. The FORTUÑO amendment would codify a 2002 executive order protecting the right of a participating faith-based organization to display a cross or other religious symbols on its grounds. Mr. Chairman, does this amendment do the same? No, it does not.

This amendment may have been written in such a way that may run counter to that executive order, potentially endangering rights faith-based providers already enjoy.

In short, Mr. Chairman, in an attempt to play politics, this amendment is, at best, an attempt to provide political cover for Members who do not want to take a real vote on the issue; and at worst, a poorly drafted measure that may end up turning back the clock on the rights of faith-based providers to display religious symbols. Because of that, I urge my colleagues to oppose it.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1700

Mr. SHULER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY).

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. Chairman, we don't need any political cover. We are proud to stand for this amendment. The only political games are those being played by others.

I rise in support of this amendment, recognizing the important role that faith and community-based organizations play in Head Start's continued success. Head Start has been instrumental in advancing the development of comprehensive skills in disadvantaged children during the crucial years before they enter elementary school. Since 1965, Head Start has been a resounding success; in no small part because of faith-based organizations, organizations I support fully.

Since the beginning, community and faith-based organizations have been a part of this program and currently serve more than 90,000 children and their families. Faith-based organizations play a critical role because they are intimately familiar with the community in which they serve and are driven by a moral commitment to our youth.

This amendment reaffirms Congress' strong support for their current and future involvement in Head Start, making clear that regardless of rumors to the contrary, they will remain eligible on the same basis as other organizations to participate in Head Start.

Mr. Chairman, I urge all my colleagues to support this amendment and the passage of H.R. 1429. I am proud to support it and the faith-based organizations that will serve it.

Mr. SHULER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER).

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding and for offering this amendment.

It is interesting that the other side would now oppose this amendment, but all day long they have been citing us the executive order with the exact same language in it as the basis for the right of faith-based organizations to participate in this program, a right that they have exercised now for more than 40 years. What your amendment does is to take it from the regulations and put it into the statute to guarantee them that right in the law, not just in the executive order and in the regulations.

In my own district, the First Baptist organization runs the Head Start program. They do a marvelous job. The reason they are kicking up the smoke-screen around Mr. SHULER's amendment is that they want to protect themselves, because they are going to come here with an amendment that is going to try to give people the right to discriminate against people based upon their religion, the right to discriminate with Federal dollars on religion.

What Mr. SHULER's amendment does is to make sure that we do not weaken